

**Foundations of Contemporary Psychology Summer 2022, Section 01**  
**Monday - Thursday, 10:50 AM -12:55 PM**  
**Room TBD**

**Instructor: Damon Tomlin, Ph.D.**  
**Email: dtomlin@wesleyan.edu**

**Office: Judd 004; (860) 685 2514**  
**Student Hours: TBD**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course will introduce you to psychology as the study of behavior and mental processes. Because there are so many areas of study within psychology, this is a broad overview. In this class, you will learn about how we perceive the world around us, how we learn new things, what makes up our “personalities,” and how we interact with others. You will also see how these things are measured (and why that’s important), and how these functions can change when a person ages or acquires a psychological disorder. Each of our class sessions will introduce you to these areas of study.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** By completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Gain an understanding of the many components that make up the human mind.
2. Appreciate the scales at which psychological processes occur, from individual cells to entire societies.
3. Improve critical thinking skills by approaching psychological phenomena from a scientific perspective.
4. Learn how psychology applies to your daily life!

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**COURSE STRUCTURE:** Course content will be delivered via in-class discussions, exercises, and lectures, as well as readings from your textbook and videos posted through Moodle. It is important that you **complete the assigned reading prior to attending lectures**. If you look below, you will see that the assigned readings do not cover entire chapters. This is because the reading highlights the most important, and most difficult, concepts that we will cover – this is where you should focus! By completing the reading before class, you will be in the best position to understand concepts as we cover them in more depth and to know what questions you would like to ask in class. That said, not all material comes from the book, so don’t expect to know everything just from the readings. Be sure to ask questions in class about any material you don’t understand – other students may have the same question, and I will be able to clarify concepts and expand your knowledge of selected topics (you can, of course, ask questions via email or during student hours, if you prefer).

**ATTENDANCE: Attendance at lecture is strongly recommended.** Class begins at 10:50 AM – please come on time. Though attendance during lecture is not formally graded, there are in-class exercises that are part of your grade, and you are expected to be present at every class meeting. If you miss class, you should get notes from a classmate, then come to Professor Tomlin’s student hours if you have any questions.

**REQUIRED TEXT:** Schachter, D. L., Gilbert, D. T., Nock, M. K., & Wegner, D. M. (2020). *Psychology* (5<sup>th</sup> edition), Worth Publishers (ISBN: 978-1-319-19080-4).

**MOODLE AND TECHNOLOGY:** Course materials (such as lecture slides, practice quizzes, and study guides) will be delivered on Moodle. If you don’t know how to access this course on Moodle or have any trouble with the site, please contact Professor Tomlin right away.

**LEARNING ASSESSMENTS:** Grades are based on five components, as detailed below.

**In-class exercises:** Though attendance is not taken for a grade, your grade *will* depend on participation in exercises each class day. As long as you followed the instructions for the exercise, you will receive full credit.

**Discussion:** For each class session (except the first one), Professor Tomlin will post a short video on Moodle which poses one or more questions related to the content of the previous meeting. These questions will ask you to relate course concepts to something you experienced, question conventional wisdom, or even design a psychology experiment! While everyone is expected to contribute to class discussion, each question will have one or more “discussion leaders.” To become a discussion leader, simply sign up for the corresponding question ahead of time (or email Professor Tomlin to find out if a spot is available).

If you are the discussion leader, you should have a substantive answer to the question in order to begin the discussion (you don’t need to memorize anything, but aim for a minute or more). **You will earn three “discussion points” during the semester.** One of them must come from being a discussion leader. The other two can come from a) being a discussion leader again (if spots are available), b) having a substantive response to the question even when you aren’t the leader, or c) turning in a written response (which is a good option if you had something to say but we ran out of time – aim for 200 words) via Moodle.

**Comprehension Quizzes:** Each session (except for our last session on Monday, July 25<sup>th</sup>) is accompanied by an online quiz on Moodle: as long as you answer most of the questions correctly, you will get full credit for it.

**Quizzes will become available at the end of each class session, and are due 48 hours later** (when you take quizzes within that time is up to you). When you take the quizzes, you’ll notice that the **correct answers are not marked.** This is because you get **two chances to pass.** So, after taking the quiz the first time, figure out what you got wrong and what the correct answers are! These quizzes serve two purposes. First, they make sure that you are staying on pace with the material. Second, they demonstrate to Professor Tomlin which topics everyone in the class found difficult.

**Essays:** You will write a brief essay (1000-1250 words) during the semester. There are two kinds of essays you may create, and you may use either one. The first is an essay relating three course concepts to something you experienced, saw/read in the news, or saw in a book/movie/etc. (if you have an idea for a topic but are unsure if it will work, just check with Professor Tomlin). The second kind of essay summarizes an experiment from a “primary research article”; for this one, you will need to explain how the experiment worked, what the researchers discovered, and why that discovery is important. You may find your own article, or choose from those that are posted under in a folder under “Writing Assignments” on Moodle. **Your essay must be turned in on Moodle by our last meeting on Monday, July 25<sup>th</sup>** (though it’s not a good idea to wait that long to do them).

**Exams:** There are four online exams, each counting equally. Exams are open-book/notes, and consist of fill-in-the-blank, short answer, and multiple choice questions. Questions will cover content from the class meetings and readings for each week. Exams will be administered via Moodle and **are due by 11:59 PM on the days shown in the course schedule.** For the first three exams, the due date is the first class day following the week being tested. The fourth is due by 11:59 PM on the last day of the final exam period.

**Extra credit:** You may write up to two “extra credit assignments,” following the same requirements as the essays above. For each essay that adheres to the guidelines, you will earn an additional ½ of a point on your final grade. Extra credit assignments are due by the beginning of our last meeting on Monday, July 25<sup>th</sup>. If you write one or more extra credit assignments, submit them in Moodle under “Writing Assignments.”

<i>Points per Component</i>	
Exams	280
Essays	76
Discussion	54
In-class exercises	45
Weekly quizzes	45
Total	500

## GRADE BREAKDOWN:

96.6-100%: A+		
93.4-96.5%: A	80.0-83.3%: B-	66.6-69.9%: D+
90.0-93.3%: A-	76.6-79.9%: C+	63.4-66.5%: D
86.6-89.9%: B+	73.4-76.5%: C	60.0-63.3%: D-
83.4-86.5%: B	70.0-73.3%: C-	< 60%: F

Professor Tomlin will, if needed, “curve” the final grades (though this is seldom necessary). The posted grades will be the uncurved versions, and any curve will be in *percentage points*. For example, if you have an 83% average and there is a 3 point curve, your adjusted final grade will be 86% (plus any extra credit).

## COURSE POLICIES:

**Withdrawals:** You may withdraw from the course through Thursday, July 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Classroom etiquette:** Please refrain from talking or making any disturbances during class. Cell phones and other handheld electronics should be OFF once class begins, and texting during class will result in your being asked to leave (if you are expecting an urgent call during class time, talk to Professor Tomlin before class begins). Computers are allowed but are a *privilege* unless you have an accommodation: if your laptop use is distracting to other students, you will be asked to put it away.

Please be respectful of your fellow students, and Professor Tomlin, during class. This includes not only common courtesy (e.g., not interrupting or holding side conversations in general), but respect for other students’ viewpoints – open discussion is a critical part of the scientific process. Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, color, culture, religion, creed, politics, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and gender expression, age, ability, and nationality. Class rosters are provided to Professor Tomlin with your legal name; he will gladly honor any request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise Professor Tomlin of this preference early in the semester so that appropriate changes can be made. For more information, see the policies on [the student code](#).

In a similar vein, there are no “stupid questions.” Not everyone comes in with the same knowledge and, though you may already some of the material covered, sooner or later you will run into something unfamiliar! So, please ask questions – if you don’t understand one of the concepts in class, it is likely that someone else is having trouble as well. If you have a question outside of class time (or one that doesn’t pertain to the current topic), feel free to email Professor Tomlin or come to student hours.

**Make-up Exams:** Because you have flexibility in exactly *when* you take the online exams, you are only eligible for a make-up under specific circumstances, such as the death of a family member, religious holiday, jury duty, an official University function, or severe illness (please give Professor Tomlin documentation in the latter three cases). If you think you will miss an exam, please check with Professor Tomlin beforehand to determine whether you will be eligible for a makeup. Make-up exams are only possible *after* the nominal date; if you miss the final and are eligible, you will receive an “incomplete” for the class and will take the fourth exam during the following semester.

**Email as official communication:** Professor Tomlin will use your Wesleyan email account for all official communication. This includes both announcements sent to the entire class and communication sent to you specifically, so you should check your email account regularly. It is also best to use email to communicate with Professor Tomlin regarding any questions, problems, or concerns that you may have.

***Students with disabilities:*** Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a disability as defined by the ADA. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

If you have a disability, or think that you might have a disability, please contact Accessibility Services in order to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. Accessibility Services is located in North College, room 021 or can be reached by email ([accessibility@wesleyan.edu](mailto:accessibility@wesleyan.edu)) or phone (860-685-2332).

***Religious/Spiritual Observance Resources:*** If you anticipate that your religious/spiritual observance may conflict with academic obligations such as attending class, taking examinations, or submitting assignments, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements. Should you require additional support or guidance, please feel free to reach out to Rabbi David Teva, Director of the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at [dleipziger@wesleyan.edu](mailto:dleipziger@wesleyan.edu) or any of the chaplains in the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life at <https://www.wesleyan.edu/orsl/index.html>. For a list of a religious holidays celebrated by members of the Wesleyan community, go to Wesleyan's Multifaith calendar which can be found at: <https://www.wesleyan.edu/orsl/multifaith-calendar.html>.

***Title IX Resources:*** If trauma inhibits your ability to fully participate in class, please contact Debbie Colucci, Title IX Coordinator, at [dcolucci@wesleyan.edu](mailto:dcolucci@wesleyan.edu), or your class dean. Additionally, and if you are comfortable, you can work directly with your professor to make reasonable arrangements.

***Covid-19 code of conduct:*** To protect your health and safety, the health and safety of instructors and staff, and the health and safety of your peers, all students must understand and adhere to the University's Covid-19 Code of Conduct. Students are encouraged to review the code of conduct regularly to stay up to date on the current code. Professor Tomlin reserves the right to refuse to allow any student into the classroom who does not adhere this code of conduct.

***Academic Integrity:*** Each student is responsible for maintaining the integrity of their own academic work. That includes written assignments, exercises, and papers. By turning in an assignment or paper you are certifying to Professor Tomlin that it represents your work only, that you have not provided that work to anyone else, and that you have completed it without the help of any unauthorized aids or people before or during the assignment. All students of Wesleyan University are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code of this institution. Violations of this policy may include cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council – Office of Student Affairs. Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from Professor Tomlin and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). The Office of Student Affairs has more information.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading
Mon, Jun 27	What makes psychology a <i>science</i> ?	Chapter 2, pp. 41-64
Tue, Jun 28	What are <i>brain cells</i> and how do they work?	Chapter 3, pp. 73-98
Wed, Jun 29	How do we <i>detect</i> the world around us?	Ch. 4, pp. 123-138, 151-156, 162-166
Thu, Jun 30	What happens when someone <i>takes drugs</i> ?	Chapter 5, pp. 197-208
<b>Exam I due by 11:59 PM</b>		
Tue, Jul 5	How does <i>behavior change</i> over time?	Chapter 7, pp. 263-292
Wed, Jul 6	Why can't I <i>remember</i> important stuff?	Chapter 6, pp. 221-244
Thu, Jul 7	That was a bad <i>decision</i> ! Why did I do that?	Ch. 8, pp. 344-347; Ch. 9 pp. 368-385
<b>Exam II due by 11:59 PM</b>		
Mon, Jul 11	What does it mean to be <i>conscious</i> ?	Chapter 5, pp. 171-186
Tue, Jul 12	What are <i>feelings</i> and what are they for?	Chapter 8, pp. 313-332, 341-344
Wed, Jul 13	Is there a better way to deal with <i>stress</i> ?	Chapter 14, pp. 547-567
Thu, Jul 14	How do we change from <i>infancy</i> to <i>old age</i> ?	Chapter 11, pp. 429-462
<b>Exam III due by 11:59 PM</b>		
Mon, Jul 18	What is another person <i>like</i> , and why?	Chapter 12, pp. 467-488
Thu, Jul 19	What is this <i>other person</i> going to do?	Chapter 13, pp. 499-521
Tue, Jul 20	How about <i>groups of people</i> (and what's a group)?	Chapter 13, pp. 521-542
Thu, Jul 21	What is a <i>psychological disorder</i> ?	Chapter 15, pp. 583-614
<b>Last day to withdraw</b>		
Mon, Jul 25	How are psychological disorders <i>treated</i> ?	Chapter 16, pp. 629-662
<b>Exam IV due by 11:59 PM</b>		
Wed, Jul 27		

This syllabus is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class.